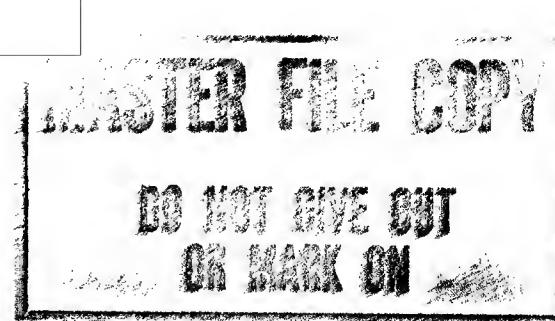


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INTERAGENCY INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

28 March 1985

NORTH KOREA: OFFENSIVE CHEMICAL WARFARE CAPABILITY

This Interagency Intelligence Assessment was undertaken at the request of the Commander-in-Chief, UN Command, Korea. It was prepared by [redacted] DIA/DB-2D1, under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer at Large, and was coordinated at the working level with the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, and with the intelligence arms of the Army, Navy and Air Force. [redacted]

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**NORTH KOREA: OFFENSIVE CHEMICAL WARFARE CAPABILITY****SCOPE NOTE**

We examined all available evidence about chemical agent production, acquisition and storage; chemical-capable weapons systems; and employment options and tactics.

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25X1**KEY JUDGMENTS**

We believe that sufficient risk of North Korean employment of chemical weapons exists that Allied forces should be prepared to encounter limited offensive chemical warfare (CW) operations. Our judgment is based on analysis in conjunction with the following technical factors:

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- o North Korea's chemical industrial base is capable of supporting the production of CW munitions and agents such as phosgene, chloropicrin, hydrogen cyanide and mustard.
- o North Korea can wed these agents and munitions to a variety of appropriate delivery systems.
- o North Korea has CW protective materiel which appears to be of good quality.
- o For at least a decade, North Korean forces have trained to sustain combat operations in a chemically contaminated environment.

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We have no conclusive evidence indicating that the North Koreans have produced or are now producing industrial -- dual-use -- chemicals for CW employment purposes. We also have no evidence that they have produced nerve agents.

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We believe that North Korea has obtained an unknown quantity of chemical agents from the Soviet Union, possibly to be used for research, testing and/or training. There is no evidence that the North Koreans currently obtain CW agents of any kind from the USSR or any other country. [redacted]

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We believe that North Korea is attempting to upgrade its CW protective materiel, which would enhance its ability to conduct mobile operations in a contaminated environment. [redacted]

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#### PRODUCTION

North Korea's industrial base currently can produce a range of chemicals -- such as phosgene, chloropicrin, mustard and hydrogen cyanide -- to support military requirements. North Korean facilities which are capable of production of these agents are industrial chemical processing plants with a variety of end products. Within these plants some sections could be dedicated to agent production, [redacted]

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We believe that North Korea's chemical production base could produce an expanded range of CW agents if turned to such an effort. The North has a developed chemical industry adequate to its civil needs, and there are qualified scientists and chemical engineers on which to draw for CW agent production. Additionally, it appears that over the past few years North Korea may have expanded various chemical plants for the production of war materiel. North Korea both imports and indigenously produces precursor materiel that can be used for production of a variety of CW agents. [redacted]

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#### RDT&E

North Korea reportedly has been conducting CW research for at least 15 years. Recent reports suggest that a shift in emphasis has occurred, from the study of protective CW materiel to the study abroad -- USSR, PRC -- of the physiological effects of CW agents and possibly agent production techniques. [redacted]

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While several areas in North Korea have been identified as capable of chemical munitions testing, we have no evidence to indicate that they have been or are being used in this capacity. [redacted]

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<sup>1</sup> While all of these chemicals except mustard have industrial uses, they also have been used by various countries as CW agents. [redacted]

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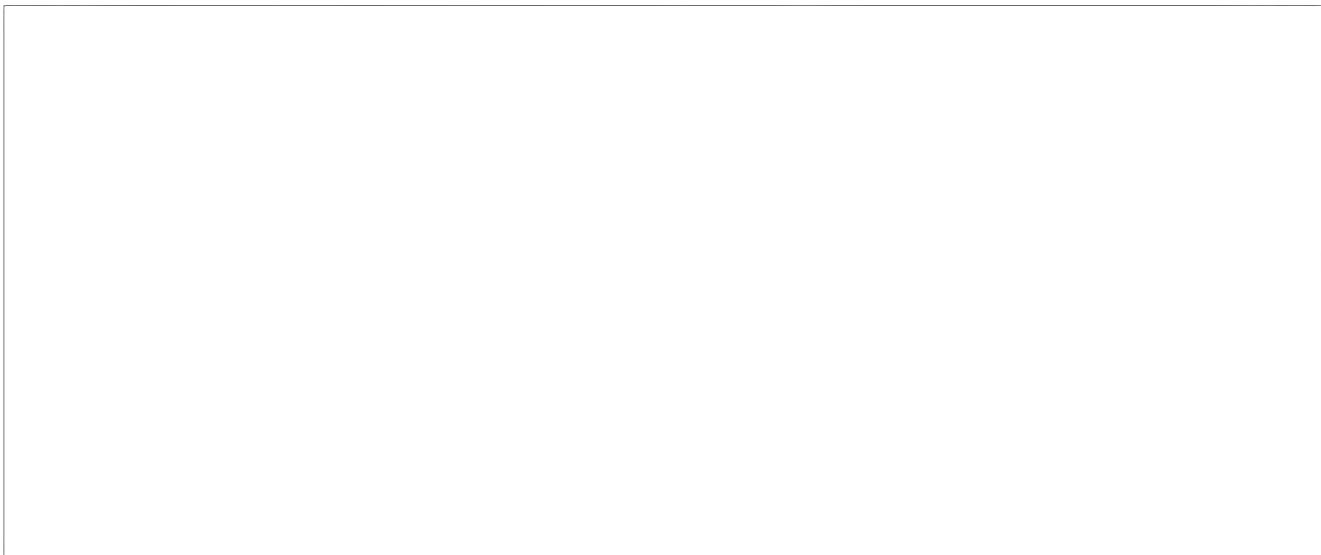
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#### CURRENT NORTH KOREAN PROTECTIVE CAPABILITIES

The protective CW equipment maintained by the army's chemical service units is held by the chemical battalions (corps level), chemical companies (division/brigade level), and chemical platoons (regiment level). Naval and air force units also have chemical service units assigned that maintain supplies of CW protective equipment. All chemical service units conduct chemical reconnaissance and decontamination training.

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#### 7.1 Unit Protective Equipment

Most unit protective equipment appears to be of Soviet design. Vehicles used to mount decontamination equipment may be of Soviet origin or indigenously produced. Decontamination equipment identified with army chemical units includes:

- o the DDA-53, DDP and a variant of the ARS-12/14, designed to decontaminate clothing and personal equipment; and

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o the ADM-48D and BU-4, for decontamination of small arms and equipment, mortars and artillery.

The ARS-12/14 can also be used to spray liquid decontaminants on roads and terrain.

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## 7.2 Individual Protective Equipment

Individual protective equipment includes protective masks (for example, the Soviet ShM-1), gloves and buskins, "capes" (oil-impregnated or vinyl tarp), and chemical first aid/antidote kits.

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The only standard equipment issued is a training mask, which reportedly is issued without filtration canisters. The rest of the equipment, including the combat mask, is stored in unit central chemical warehouses.

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## TRAINING

Combat troops -- and probably combat support troops -- participate in major chemical training exercises once or twice a year depending on the unit.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Evidence also indicates that portions of the civilian population may be included in exercise operations in a contaminated environment.

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Based on reports obtained between 1982 and 1985 we believe there is an increasing emphasis on sustaining ground, air and naval combat operations in a contaminated environment. [redacted] reported training emphasis on the following:

- o Rapid decontamination on the march.
- o Movement through contaminated areas.
- o Chemical reconnaissance in a contaminated environment.
- o Training on small unit obstacle/assault courses in a contaminated environment.
- o Training in protective gear in an area devoid of decontamination equipment.
- o Shipboard firing exercises in a contaminated environment. [redacted]

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None of these activities confirms or denies offensive CW intent, training or employment. They do demonstrate an enhanced capability to conduct combat operations in a contaminated environment.

The improvements in North Korea's chemical capabilities are part of the current force modernization effort. As the ground forces modernize, mechanize and generally prepare to wage a rapid, mobile war, the capability to sustain operations -- whether offensive, defensive or counteroffensive -- in a chemical environment assumes additional importance regardless of the source of the chemical contamination. [redacted]

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#### IMPLICATIONS

There is good evidence that North Korea perceives a chemical threat from allied forces. Development of a limited offensive capability may have been undertaken as a deterrent to that perceived threat. Alternatively, the North Koreans may view the capability to wage CW as a cost-effective force multiplier. Regardless of the rationale, we believe that North Korea will continue to develop its capabilities to conduct CW operations -- whether offensive or protective -- against Allied forces. [redacted]

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